Chapter 5: Skinner Butte Park Master Plan

Park Policy Framework

Introduction

This chapter begins by recapturing the policy information provided in Chapter 1. The purpose is to outline the policy framework developed during the public involvement and research process as a reference point for further policy refinements as follows:

- **Management Units**
- **Habitat Management Plan**
- **Viewshed Management Plan**

At the end of this chapter, the most practical and important piece of the master plan is presented: the **Implementation Plan**.

Vision Statement

The Skinner Butte Park vision statement responds to the issues and desires generated at the first public workshop. It is a long-term picture of how the park should look and function. A draft vision statement was presented at the second workshop and amended to become more inclusive and respond to a desire for emphasis in certain areas. It is meant to be the overall guide under which all aspects of the master plan are organized. In other words, the goals, strategies and actions listed hereafter are all tools to realize this vision

Vision Statement

As the birthplace of Eugene, and as a unique landmark of geography, history and ecology, Skinner Butte Park plays a vital role at the heart of our community. The care and stewardship of this public resource shall be a top priority, with a focus on creating a "crown jewel" of Eugene's parks. Skinner Butte Park will foster civic pride and a citywide sense of community, and will provide a diverse blend of recreational and educational opportunities for everyone. This shall be accomplished by emphasizing and interpreting its rich cultural history and unique geography, including the butte and the Willamette River; by building a stronger connection to downtown; by revitalizing its core park facilities and, above all; by protecting and enhancing its valuable native habitats for the enjoyment of future generations.

Issues

The vision statement responds to a set of current issues surrounding the park. The following list highlights the most commonly mentioned and critical of these issues as they were explored during the first public workshop session. The list has been updated and revised as research and broader public input helped direct the process. The planning process was aimed at addressing these specific issues, which helped set the tone for discussions and research leading to the set of recommendations contained in this plan. This list expands on the issues presented in Chapter 1.

Issue #1: The mission and role of the park is unclear.

Issue #2: The park's rich natural and cultural history has tremendous potential but is poorly represented and interpreted.

- The park is the physical origin of the city and local community.
- Local native cultures had a presence in the park for thousands of years that is not currently represented.
- Many historical features that exist in the park remain anonymous.
- Some historic features in the park are deteriorating.
- No clear policy exists regarding the role of the SMJ house in the park.
- Historic views from the butte are largely gone and disappearing quickly.

Issue #3: Active management of natural areas is needed.

- Natural resources have a high community value.
- Most natural areas in the park are dominated by invasive vegetation.
- Some valuable native habitat is in danger of being lost.
- Rare plants exist in the park.
- No comprehensive natural resources study exists for the park.
- Some conflicts exist between maintenance practices and natural systems.
- No staff resources are available for maintenance of natural areas.

Issue #4: Park amenities are insufficient and outdated.

- The park has a strong civic focus, but lacks certain key support facilities.
- Many support facilities were developed between 25 and 50 years ago, and no longer retain the quality and function to support the needs of a growing population.
- The west end of the park remains undeveloped and under-utilized.
- Physical intrusions such as the radio tower impact recreation and aesthetic values.

Issue #5: The butte embodies multiple unique values.

- The butte is a geographic landmark of historic significance, whose historic appearance and view sheds are threatened by forestation in the absence of pre-historic management.
- The butte contains remnant natural areas of noteworthy integrity, especially valuable for their proximity to downtown, that are threatened by forestation and invasive vegetation.
- The butte is a significant feature for native resident and migratory birds.
- The butte represents a civic focus, attraction and icon for a community identity, but is in poor repair and lends a somewhat run-down image.

The Master Plan responds to a set of current issues in the park

The University of Oregon observatory, seen here in this 1890 photograph, is one example of a rich history in Skinner Butte Park that needs to be made available to the community through more interpretation

An informal footpath follows the banks of the Willamette River in Skinner Butte Park. Recognizing and celebrating the river is seen as important to the future of the park

Issue #6: The Willamette River is a key component of the park.

- The river is a unique and dominating feature that connects the park regionally.
- The river corridor provides valuable habitat.
- A large section of the river bank is in danger of collapse or major erosion.
- Current bank stabilization methods are not environmentally sensitive.
- There is potential for using natural river bank restoration techniques.
- Some activities, such as illegal camping and mountain biking, may adversely affect the quality of the riparian area for both habitat and recreation.

Issue #7: A connection from the butte to downtown is of key importance, but does not currently exist.

- There is no direct access from downtown to the butte due to the 3rd/4th connector, a private parking lot and the railroad tracks.
- A historic plan for a pedestrian corridor from Willamette Street to the butte was never realized, but remains key to the function of the park.
- Illegal camping and poorly defined paths dominate the pedestrian experience on the south butte from the summit to downtown.

Multiple interests require a sound decision-making framework

Issue #8: Access and circulation are adequate, but could be improved.

- Entrances to the park are generally not well defined.
- Bike and pedestrian access from downtown and adjacent neighborhoods is poor.
- The hiking trail system has potential but is poorly defined and feels unsafe.
- Undefined trails in the natural areas on the river and butte are causing damage.
- The existing I-105 underpass is closed and unused.
- I-105 has several adverse impacts on the park and adjacent neighborhood.

Policy Goals

The following goals are adapted from research, interviews and responses at public workshops for the Skinner Butte Master plan. These goals set the stage for specific ways of achieving the vision presented in the vision statement. They can also be called "policy goals" in that they affect park improvement, maintenance and programming policies, as well as how future ideas for what to do with the park will be evaluated.

1. **Preserve, enhance and recognize Skinner Butte Park's rich natural and cultural history as a predominant theme, and promote this through diverse interpretive and educational opportunities.**

2. **Protect, repair and restore the health and viability of diverse habitat types in Skinner Butte Park by creatively managing valuable natural resources and successional processes.**

3. **Improve and maintain Skinner Butte Park as a key, high-quality civic destination for private, public, community and neighborhood social events, activities and individual recreation.**

4. **Recognize the Willamette River and the river corridor as a key component of Skinner Butte Park, and protect, repair and restore this resource while integrating a balance of recreational access and use.**

5. **Emphasize and encourage bicycle and pedestrian transportation while providing for clear, convenient and adequate disabled access and vehicular use within Skinner Butte Park .**

6. **Recognize and strengthen Skinner Butte Park's connection with downtown and adjacent neighborhoods.**

Strategies

Specific strategies and actions are recommended to execute the master planning goals for Skinner Butte Park. These are essentially the nuts and bolts of the master plan, and begin to chart the way, step by step, toward realizing the overall vision for the park. The outline of these strategies is provided in Chapter 1.

Strategies provide categories for specific ideas (actions) about making changes in the park. In this chapter, the strategies are integrated directly into the **Implementation Plan** spreadsheet at the end of the chapter.

Management Units

Introduction

In this section, the general approach to management of Skinner Butte Park will be discussed to provide a framework for the Implementation Plan. This will help guide permitted uses, maintenance operations, volunteer projects and other efforts not specifically covered in the Implementation Plan. See Map 7 for a graphic key to the management units described in this chapter.

Intent and Application

The Implementation Plan recommends the creation of management units within the park to identify specific areas and highlight preferred uses, management guidelines and development patterns appropriate to each area. Management Units for Skinner Butte Park will include a diversity of management types, including recreational units and habitat units, that indicate the focus of the area.

Criteria

The Skinner Butte Park management units were created to balance a diversity of uses throughout the park, and emphasize uses and management types that are most suitable to each area. Preferred uses and management recommendations shall reflect the intent of the Master Plan vision and policy goals in various areas of the park. Each unit shall be described by a general boundary as shown on Map 7.

Modification of Units

Unit boundaries are general in nature and may be modified based on the findings of future research efforts such as the habitat inventory, oversights in the planning process, and/or evolving use patterns of the park.

Management Units help define uses and development patterns for diverse areas within the park

The Campbell Senior Center is one example of many different types of facilities and land uses present in Skinner Butte Park. Defining appropriate uses through management units is a key goal of the Master Plan.

The undeveloped west end of Skinner Butte Park, shown here, will benefit from a clear definition of preferred use types

Management Units are divided into three separate categories:

Habitat Units
Recreation Units
Special Units

Unit Categories

Each Management Unit fits into one of several general categories. Overall preferred uses and facility types are listed below for each of these categories. Note that these general preferences may be refined by each individual Management Unit description.

H - Habitat Unit

Focus: *Habitat Units focus on the preservation, restoration and maintenance of diverse habitat types in the park.*

Preferred Uses: *Preferred uses for these areas include restoration and maintenance activities by City staff, contractors and/or volunteer efforts as outlined in the* ***Habitat Management Plan, the Viewshed Management Plan*** *and the* ***Implementation Plan****. Other preferred uses include passive recreation and access to habitat units for hiking, birding, observing nature, classes, education and similar activities. Large group events or activities, uses that create excessive noise or damage to native vegetation, and programmed uses (besides educational, restoration or maintenance activities) are strongly discouraged for these areas.*

Facilities: *Facilities appropriate for these areas include soft surface trails such as gravel or wood chips, dirt trails, wayfinding signage, interpretive kiosks or signs for ecology or history, limited benches of natural materials, railings, and small bridges or boardwalks where necessary. Facilities not in keeping with habitat management values are also discouraged, except as specifically noted for each zone. Care should be taken to avoid rare plant populations, significant bird nesting sites and other key ecological considerations.*

Vegetation Management: *Appropriate vegetation types shall be described for each zone. See Chapter 3 for descriptions of existing vegetation in specific areas.*

R - Recreation Unit

Focus: *Recreation Units focus on recreational uses generally appropriate for Skinner Butte Park.*

Preferred Uses: *Preferred uses include individual, informal recreation such as walking, running, biking, kite flying, Frisbee, children's play, picnicking, family events, large community events, exhibitions, and celebrations, programmed events and activities, private events, informal and programmed use of existing facilities as described specifically by each unity, education, classes, tours, etc. Uses not appropriate for these areas include programmed, organized field sports such as soccer and softball.*

Facilities: *Facilities appropriate to these areas shall be ADA accessible and include hard-surface paths, pedestrian-scale lights, benches, picnic tables, shelters, play equipment, art installations, interpretive features, bike facilities, parking and utility access, water and power sources, etc. as specifically described for each unit, or as noted the Implementation Plan.*

Vegetation Management: *Appropriate vegetation types shall be described for each zone.*

S - Special Unit

Special Units are unique in purpose and/or character, and are described individually in terms of use and management, as well as their special relationship to the park.

Management Unit Descriptions

Habitat Units (H1 - H10)

H1: North Skinner Butte Forest
Native forest ecosystem management is the top priority for this area. Management should support succession towards a healthy, old growth forest characterized by a multi-story stand of bigleaf maple, Douglas fir, grand fir, and other mixed conifer and hardwood species native to the Willamette Valley. Middle and understory vegetation shall also be managed for a maximum diversity of native species. The generally-applicable resource management objectives and strategies outlined in the HPFMP for the Douglas Fir Management Unit (FMU) are appropriate for this unit.

Special appropriate uses include the designation of a significant pedestrian route from the summit of the butte, approximately following the route of existing trails, to the historic picnic area at the northern foot of the butte. This pedestrian route will include the use of natural materials such as stone masonry, stairways, benches, and some areas of railings to control short cutting and erosion.

H2: South Skinner Butte Mixed Transitional Forest
Native forest ecosystem management is the top priority for this area. Removal of invasive species and directing forest succession towards a healthy native system of higher diversity and greater habitat function is a key management goal. Diverse forest types should be allowed to develop naturally within the unit.

Multiple master plan management goals affect this area, and need to be accommodated. In particular, the Critical Viewshed Overlay Zones predominantly affects this area, and shall be applied according to the Viewshed Management Plan. This area is also covered by the Bird Migration Overlay Zone that encourages the long-term maintenance of a significant, native tree canopy.

The North Skinner Butte Forest (H1) unit is characterized by several layers of native plants, as well as rapidly spreading areas of invasive English ivy.

Special appropriate uses include the designation of a significant pedestrian route from the southern foot of the butte near the Shelton McMurphey Johnson House, approximately following the route of existing trails, to the summit of the butte. This pedestrian route will include the use of natural materials such as stone masonry, stairways, benches, and some areas of railings to control short-cutting and erosion. Low-level pedestrian lighting will be allowed along this route.

H3: Oak Savanna Transition Area
Native oak savanna ecosystem management is the top priority for this area. The band of oak and dense undergrowth that defines the northern edge of existing upland prairie and managed meadow areas should be preserved near its current condition. This band generally reaches from the western edge of the butte to the eastern edge, and provides a key transition area from the more open habitats to the

Special uses that are considered appropriate for each habitat unit are listed in the unit descriptions

Some Habitat Units recommend restoring historic habitat types

south into the forested condition on the north side of the butte. Invasive species may be removed in these areas, as well as native species such as Douglas fir, bigleaf maple and incense cedar that would compete with the oak woodland. Understory native vegetation, such as serviceberry, ocean spray, indian plum, snowberry and native herbaceous plants should be left intact. The transition area may, however, be extended into the prairie areas with native shrubs, etc. Oregon white oak should be added or encouraged to preserve future succession of this habitat type. Uses for this area are consistent with the general Habitat Management Unit description.

H4: Upland Prairie

Native upland prairie ecosystem management is the top priority for this area. Existing areas of relatively intact native upland prairie shall be enhanced and expanded. Some conversion of portions of the South Skinner Butte Mixed Forest (see Chapter 4) towards a native upland prairie ecosystem will occur in this area. In prairie restoration areas, non-native trees as well as most native conifers and maples may be removed to create appropriate growing conditions for upland prairie plant communities. See the **Habitat Management Plan** for restoration criteria, including the tree removal authorization. Some native oaks, madrone and maple will be left in transition areas of this unit. Selected smaller, native trees may also be planted in these areas to add to the overall plant diversity and habitat value. Other trees may remain for screening or other aesthetic purposes. Uses for this area are consistent with the general Habitat Management Unit description.

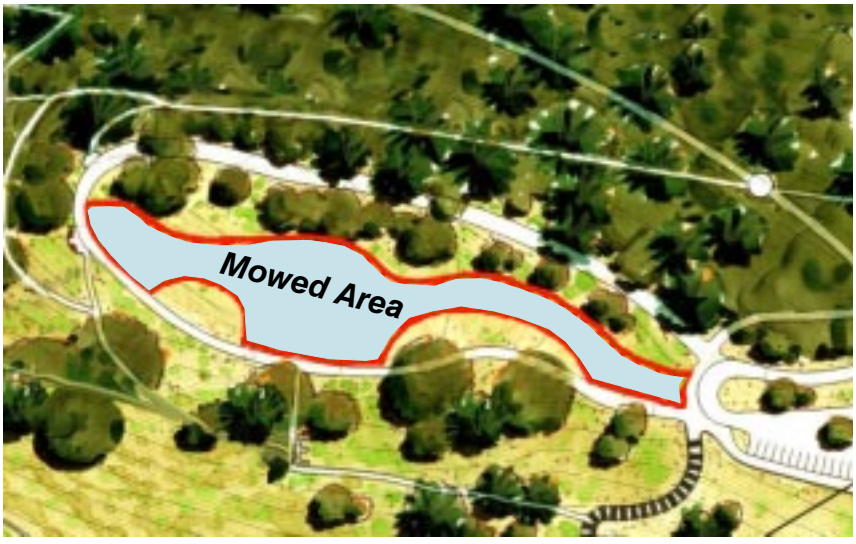
H5: Wet Prairie

Native wet prairie ecosystem management is a high priority for this area. Irrigated, non-native lawn areas will be converted toward a functional wet prairie ecosystem. Irrigation will be discontinued, and a mowing schedule appropriate for wet prairie management will be commenced. Scattered native trees appropriate to wet prairie growing conditions may be added to this area. Non-native plants along the existing embankment below (north of) Cheshire Avenue and in the east end (picnic area/parking lot embankments) may be removed and replaced with lower-growing native species. Visibility from Cheshire Avenue and parking areas into the park is a priority.

Special appropriate uses include individual, group or community uses ancillary to use or rental of Lamb Cottage. Picnicking, barbecues, etc. may occur in this area as conditions such as soil moisture permit. Maintenance schedules and priorities for wet prairie areas, however, need not be altered to accommodate these uses. A 20-foot wide strip of mowed, irrigated lawn shall be retained along the bike path through this unit. All current and future uses and facilities related to the bike path shall be allowed for the bike path and lawn strip area, including lighting, bike parking, benches, signs, etc. Picnicking and uses related to the existing picnic area at the east end of this unit are also appropriate.

Redevelopment of hard surface paths for pedestrian and bicycle traffic will also occur in this area. These paths shall be consistent with the intent conveyed by the Skinner Butte Park Draft Master Plan illustration (see Map 1).

Figure 3: H5 Skinner Butte Summit Mowed Area



H6: Upland Prairie / Wet Prairie
A blend of native upland and wet prairie ecosystem management shall be the top priority for this area. See units H4 and H6, respectively, for upland prairie and wet prairie habitat management guidelines. Significant conversion of non-native, irrigated lawn areas towards upland and wet prairie ecosystems will occur in this area. Irrigation will be discontinued, and a mowing schedule appropriate for native prairie management will be commenced.

Special appropriate uses for this area includes cultivation, maintenance and harvest of camas and tar weed crops in a manner consistent with, or generally representative of, techniques applied by Native Americans in the Willamette Valley. Community events celebrating this and other interpretive values of native upland and wet prairie are also appropriate for this area. This is also seen as an opportunity area for demonstration of extinct management techniques such as seasonal burning.

Development of hard surface paths for pedestrian and bicycle traffic shall be allowed in this area. These paths shall be consistent with the intent conveyed by the Skinner Butte Park Draft Master Plan illustration (see Map 1).

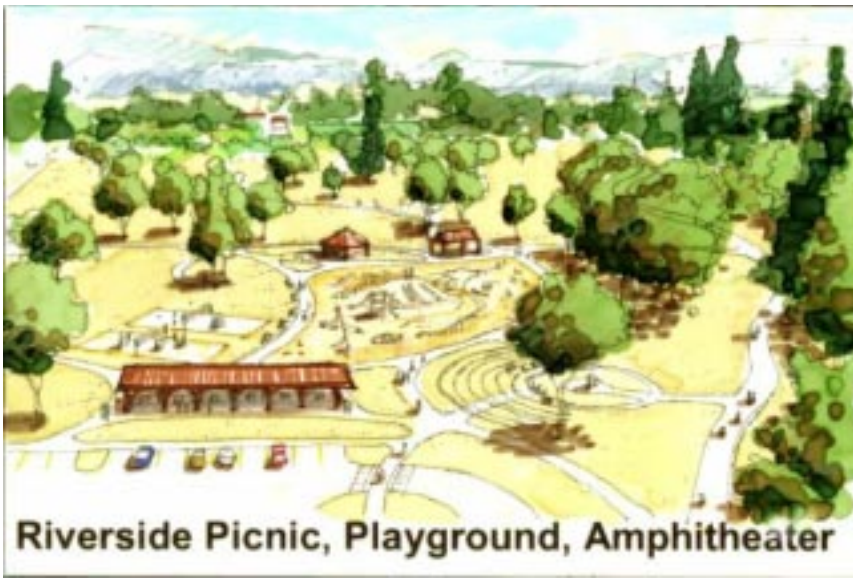
H7: Wet Prairie and Stormwater Demonstration Area
Native wet prairie and wetland ecosystem management shall be a high priority for this area. See Unit H6 for native wet prairie habitat management guidelines. Irrigated, non-native lawn areas will be converted towards a functional wet prairie and wetland ecosystem. Irrigation will be discontinued, and a mowing schedule appropriate for wet prairie management will be commenced. Demonstration stormwater treatment is a high priority use for existing low areas in this unit. These areas are generally reflected in the Skinner Butte Park Draft Master Plan illustration (see Map 1). Treatment of stormwater from Cheshire Avenue and other street, building or parking facilities developed in conjunction with the historic community farm may be diverted for retention or detention in this area. Stormwater BMP's (Best Management Practices) should guide this demonstration project, and be incorporated with interpretive features, bicycle and pedestrian paths or boardwalks, etc.

H8: Willamette Riverbank
Native riparian and riverbank ecosystem management shall be the top priority for this area. Management should support a dynamic, native riparian ecosystem characterized by multiple stages of succession for appropriate native plant communities. As in other areas, invasive species removal and progression towards greater diversity and higher habitat value is a key management goal.

Special appropriate uses include up to three locations of pedestrian river access, including one location of boat access currently used by emergency vehicles. Automotive access, other than emergency vehicles, shall not be allowed. Access to the proposed River Bottom Trail (see **Implementation Plan**) shall be restricted to pedestrian use. Trail access points, re-grading and improvements, including the addition of several trail connectors linking the River Bottom Trail to the bike path, is also appropriate for this area for visitor access, interpretation and management of visitor impact.

Many Habitat Units allow for hard or soft surface path and trails for public access

Some areas of wet, little used and difficult-to-maintain lawn areas will be converted to native wet prairie



Unit R1: The Park Core is the active heart of Skinner Butte Park. Management supporting individual, family and community recreation, social activities and events is the top priority for this area.

H9: Willamette Riverbank Erosion Control Area

Stabilizing the riverbank through "bioengineered" solutions is the top priority for this area (see Map 8). This Management Unit represents an approximate area of riverbank that may be converted to constructed riverbank terraces, including existing lawn areas and several mature trees. Management of this area following bioengineered stabilization and reconstruction of the river bank should support a dynamic, native riparian ecosystem characterized by multiple stages of succession for appropriate native plant communities. As in other areas, invasive species removal and progression towards greater diversity and higher habitat value is a key management goal. Interim management priorities include those listed for Unit H7.

Special appropriate uses for this area include uses related to the bike path as described for Unit H6. Stabilization of the riverbank through rip-rap or other structural means with low ecological value is a low priority, but may be allowed in this unit on an emergency basis.

A large portion of the river bank will be reconstructed for habitat value and erosion control

Recreation Units (R1 - R5)

R1: Park Core

Management supporting a City-wide center for individual, family, group and community recreation and events is the top priority for this area. This area will be characterized by a diversity of uses and recreational opportunities, bicycle, car and bus parking for staging and access to the River Bottom Trail, the Skinner Butte trail system, the bike path, Lamb Cottage, etc. Facilities shall include a large, redeveloped children's play area, one new, large picnic structure, one new, small picnic structure, a new amphitheater and stage area, informal turf volley ball courts, redeveloped pathways, new lighting and park furniture, existing interpretive features associated with the Skinner's cabin replica, new interpretive features, a redeveloped existing parking lot and other elements as described in the Implementation Plan. Preferred landscape types include irrigated, traditionally maintained lawn, shrub and perennial beds for showy floral display, scent, shade and aesthetic appeal. Native plants should be incorporated in place of non-native varieties where their function is similar and appropriate.

R2: Historic Picnic Area

Management supporting a City-wide center for individual, family and group picnicking is the top priority for this area. Management of the stone walls as a historic resource is also a focus for this unit. As an important transition zone from the North Skinner Butte Forest habitat zone to the concentrated human activity of the Park Core, preferred landscape types include irrigated, traditionally maintained lawn bordered by the semi-formal use of site-appropriate native plants for floral display, scent and aesthetic appeal.

R3: Overlook Area

Management supporting a high-quality community focal point is the top priority for this area. This unit is characterized by uses and recreational opportunities centered around social gathering, community events and exhibitions, enjoyment of views, picnicking, interpretive signage, and bicycle, car and bus parking for staging and

access to natural areas and the butte trail system. Preferred landscape types include irrigated, traditionally maintained lawn (if included in detailed renovation plan of area) bordered by the semi-formal or formal use of site-appropriate native plants for floral display, scent and aesthetic appeal.

R4: Skinner Butte Summit Upland Prairie and Recreation Area

This unit shall include public use of the butte summit, where a mowed area shall be maintained throughout the growing season to provide picnic and informal recreation space for uses including large groups and community events. The size of the mowed area shall be approximately as shown in Figure 3, and may be variable as approved by the Parks Planning Manager. Native upland prairie ecosystem management is a shared priority for this area. See Unit H4 for habitat restoration and management guidelines.

R5: East Skinner Butte Park

Management supporting community recreation, social gathering and events is the top priority for this area. This unit is characterized by uses and recreational opportunities related to the enjoyment of the Willamette River, the bike path, events and programming through the Campbell Senior Center, bicycle, car and bus parking for staging and access to the River Bottom Trail, the Skinner Butte trail system, the bike path, and the Campbell Senior Center. Preferred landscape types include irrigated, traditionally maintained lawn, shrub and perennial beds for showy floral display, scent, shade and aesthetic appeal. Native plants should be incorporated in place of non-native varieties where their function is similar and appropriate.

R6: The Columns

Management supporting the use of this area for publicly accessible, recreational rock climbing is the top priority for this area, including maintaining the structural integrity of the rock feature. Safety is a very high priority, and improvements or measures related to maintaining or improving safety are appropriate for this and all immediately surrounding areas. This unit is characterized by recreational rock climbing and supporting needs, such as bicycle and car parking, benches, seating areas, improved access to the top of the columns, informational and interpretive signage, and as described in the **Implementation Plan**. Consideration shall be given to the historic nature of the columns, and to conveying historic significance to casual users through passive interpretative features.

Recreation Units describe areas of the park with a primary emphasis on human recreational and social activity

Management supporting a high-quality community focal point is the top priority for the Skinner Butte summit overlook area

Unit R1: Park Core

Unit R2: Historic Picnic Area

Unit R5: East Skinner Butte Park

Unit R6: Columns Climbing Area

Unit S1: SMJ House

Unit S5: Lincoln Yard

Special Units (S1 - S5)

S1: Shelton McMurphey Johnson House

Management for a historically intact, publicly accessible historic attraction and focal point for park history is the top priority for this area. The historic home and tax lot are managed and maintained through a cooperative City effort and the contracted services of the Shelton McMurphey Johnson House Associates (SMJHA). Under contract with the City of Eugene Library, Recreation and Cultural Services Department through the Planning and Development Department's Historic Preservation Program, the SMJHA is a not-for-profit organization specifically devised to manage the daily function of programming and interpretation, and organizes contracted labor and volunteer groups to maintain the house and surrounding gardens. The City of Eugene Public Works Facilities division helps maintain the infrastructure of the home and assist PDD with management of ongoing restoration work through the University of Oregon Historic Preservation Program. The City of Eugene Parks and Open Space parks maintenance operations assist with repairs to landscape infrastructure such as the irrigation system. Many other volunteer groups and individuals are also involved with the operations and programming of the house. This collaborative approach should be continued.

Special consideration should be given to this area as the "gateway" to Skinner Butte Park from the south. Collaboration with the SMJHA for park-related history, programming and volunteer coordination is a high priority. Preferred uses include recreational, social and preservation activities associated with the house and surrounding gardens. Improved access to the house from the 3rd/4th connector, and from 3rd Avenue is a high priority. Purchase of the land between the house and the 3rd/4th connector through grants, donations or other collaborative means for parking and improved access is recommended. See the Shelton-McMurphey-Johnson House Historical Landscape Master Plan for further suggestions currently under consideration.

S2: Campbell Senior Center

Management to support programming and activities associated with the Campbell Senior Center (CSC) is the top priority for this area. Current uses include rental of facilities for social events, community events, diverse programming such as classes, dances and senior programming, an information center, a wood shop, bicycle, car and bus parking for staging and access to the CSC, the park and the river, and more. Preferred uses include existing and future uses related to the function of the CSC, including potential improvements or expansion of the facility within this management unit.

Preferred landscape types include irrigated, traditionally maintained lawn, shrub and perennial beds for showy floral display, scent, shade and aesthetic appeal. This area is particularly suited to botanical display of cultivated plant species for the enjoyment and engagement of seniors and local horticultural clubs, as well as to create a highly attractive, full-season floral and botanical display to serve as a backdrop for special social functions such as weddings, graduation ceremonies, retirement celebrations, anniversaries, etc.

S3: Facility Management Division

This area should continue to be managed for use as City offices and shop facilities. This use, although not ideally compatible, provides an important presence that contributes to positive use patterns in the park. Garden areas and grounds around these offices are currently developed in a compatible way with the park, with outdoor meeting areas, native plants and natural stone. A continuation of this type of sensitive integration is a high priority. As an important transition zone from the North Skinner Butte Forest Habitat Unit and the Upland Prairie Habitat Unit to the concentrated human activity of the Park Core, preferred landscape types include irrigated semi-formal use of site-appropriate native plants for scent and floral display. Non-native ornamental plant species may be appropriate in front of the facilities buildings facing the Park Core Recreation Unit, although native plants are encouraged where their function is similar.

S4: Historic Community Farm

Management for community agriculture, historic interpretation, education and related recreational and community activities and events is the top priority for this area. This unit is designated for redevelopment as a key community attraction celebrating the early agricultural roots of the community, and is closely linked to the Skinner's cabin replica, the Applegate Trail Interpretive Center, interpretive management of the upland and wet prairie in the H7 Management Unit, and stormwater demonstration in the H10 Management Unit. A not-for-profit organization should be sought to develop and carry out these functions on a contractual basis, with emphasis on public benefit. Both historic and modern agricultural methods, tools and philosophy are key to the function of this area, and to the role that they play in our community and culture.

Preferred facilities include a shelter or open-air barn structure, redevelopment of the Child Care, Inc. building as a park host site, greenhouses, a produce stand, tool sheds or other storage facilities ancillary to the function of the area, a community garden, demonstration gardens, a seasonal row crop area, fruit trees, etc. as well as bicycle and car parking for access to the facilities and other park features. New or renovated facilities, including fences, gates, site furniture, lighting, etc., should reflect construction techniques and styles of early settlers as closely as possible. Facilities or ancillary functions may extend towards the underpass connection to the Owen Rose Garden (see **Implementation Plan**) to begin creating thematic continuity of agriculture and horticulture between the two areas.

S5: Lincoln Yard

This property has accommodated a diversity of uses (see Chapter 2) ranging from foundry buildings associated with WPA activities during the depression, to Parks Maintenance offices and shop, to the current use as storage, training area and offices for the Eugene Police Department's Rapid Deployment Unit (RDU). With the relocation of the RDU to new facilities at Roosevelt Boulevard, this property will likely be redeveloped for another use. Past uses and development have eliminated most habitat values for this area, and a combination of physical factors such as topography and the configuration of the land make it unsuitable for most recreational uses.

The historic community farm proposal is viewed as an appropriate use for the west end of the park.

Although redevelopment for similar City-related facilities is an acceptable option, the preferred redevelopment uses for this area include those most compatible with the park, such as mixed use or high density residential. Commercial components of mixed use redevelopment may support park functions by providing nearby services (such as a cafe or bike rentals) for park visitors, whereby high-density residential redevelopment would be supported by the open space and recreation available in the park. Redevelopment should meet compatibility criteria as follows: buildings should be low enough to allow unobstructed views of the City and surrounding areas from Skinner Butte Loop; the redevelopment should create a pleasing transition or gateway to the park; native landscape elements should be used to blend with the habitat management areas on Skinner Butte.

Partnering with private community organizations is one way to activate the west end of the park

Habitat Management Plan

Plan Development

General goals and areas affected by the Habitat Management Plan were developed through the public involvement process for the overall Skinner Butte Park Master Plan. These recommendations were refined by two meetings of a combined focus group of citizen stakeholder groups, naturalists and City staff to tackle the more difficult questions of habitat and viewshed management in Skinner Butte Park. Many recommendations of this group are incorporated into this plan. Many other aspects are derived from the in-depth habitat management guidelines put forth by the Hendricks Park Forest Management Plan.

Intent and Application

The Habitat Management Plan is a component of the Skinner Butte Park Master Plan that deals specifically with the preservation, restoration and maintenance of native habitats in Skinner Butte Park. Specific recommendations of the Habitat Management Plan are contained in the **Implementation Plan** section at the end of this chapter.

Habitat Management Units

The Habitat Management Plan is further refined by 10 **Habitat Management Units** as described in the previous section of this chapter. Each unit describes a different habitat type with different management guidelines and restoration needs.

Natural areas must co-exist with areas of higher development and concentrated activity in Skinner Butte Park

Habitat Inventory

A detailed natural resource inventory has not been completed for Skinner Butte Park. The **Implementation Plan** calls for a survey be conducted for identified **Habitat Management Units**, and for habitat recommendations be drafted that are specific to those areas. Furthermore, significant areas of Skinner Butte Park are recommended for major restoration efforts, or conversion from traditionally maintained park areas to an approximation of suitable native habitats such as wet prairie, upland prairie and oak savanna-prairie. This effort will require new restoration and maintenance techniques.

Balanced Approach

Although preservation and restoration of natural areas in the park is among the highest priorities, Skinner Butte Park takes a broad focus on recreational needs. Specifically, natural areas must co-exist with areas of higher, concentrated activity such as the main picnic area and playground, the summit overlook area, the Campbell Senior Center, the redeveloped west end, the EWEB Reservoir, the Shelton McMurphey Johnson House, and other areas. The proposed **Management Units** for Skinner Butte Park help clarify and prioritize this mix of uses.

Public Access a High Priority

Public education and the celebration of diverse native habitats near the downtown area shall be a primary goal of native habitat areas in Skinner Butte Park. The park is an excellent place to expand local awareness of native habitat values, and should be as accessible as possible for that purpose. Therefore, generally higher levels of public use must be anticipated and accommodated in native habitat areas, and it is likely that special measures will need to be taken to protect them. Such measures may include more passive interpretation and public information, as well as physical improvements such as better trails and railings to help keep visitors on trails and out of specific areas.

Incremental Change and Education

Community involvement, interpretation and public outreach are seen as critical to laying the foundation for understanding, acceptance and support for managing certain habitat types. This is especially true for managing areas of Skinner Butte towards open prairie and savanna-prairie habitats. Examples might include volunteer

Undefined trails and lack of visitor information contribute to erosion and compaction along the riverbank. A clear trail system will help habitat restoration efforts by focusing user activity in certain areas.

participation in specific projects, dissemination of information through volunteer organizations, interpretive displays in areas where work is being done, permanent interpretive displays discussing historic vegetation patterns, their function, and changes that have taken over time, tours, articles, etc.

Plan Now but Build in Flexibility

Decisions can and should be made now that reflect current opinions and utilize current knowledge. There are several reasons for this: 1) much information on public opinion has been gathered through the Skinner Butte Park Master Plan public involvement program that supports the current approach; 2) over the next 20 or so years, there will not likely be a more extensive public process to collect this type of information than what has already been undertaken; 3) management decisions affecting natural areas are made every day and cannot wait for the possibility of a future process, and; 4) management policies will provide a base line for decision making that can be modified as knowledge and public opinion changes. Coupled with the understanding that active management of natural areas (including the reversal of forestation in some areas, and the management towards native forest in other areas) will happen over a period of time, built-in flexibility is needed for new information to change the course or fine-tune policies set by this master planning process.

Recognize a Dynamic System and Plan Accordingly

Similarly, natural areas will change over time. Active management will be required to maintain a certain type of habitat. Areas that are left alone will transform, through succession, into something else. Management methods explored by the Habitat Inventory should set forth acceptable levels and kinds of change, and allowance should be made for disturbance events, such as wind storms, fires, land slides and floods, that define natural systems.

Focus on the Preservation of High Quality Habitat

It was generally understood that restoration and expansion of certain habitat types, in particular the restoration of upland prairie on Skinner Butte, will need to happen over time. It is not something that can be affected in the short-term. To begin the process, the focus should be on preserving and protecting the most valuable areas first, then the process of succession can begin to be reversed around the edges of these areas, expanding the functional habitat towards a future, desired level of coverage on the butte. This desired level is reflected in Map 7: Habitat Management Units.

Habitat Transition Areas

The edges of the habitat zones, for example restored upland prairie, can and should be a dynamic zone. Decisions about the actual extent of habitat types will be fine-tuned on the ground on a project-by-project basis. The general area of prairie and savanna prairie outlined by the Habitat Management Units, for examle, is meant to serve as a guideline. Particular trees or specific conditions should inform the process of restoring these areas as much as possible (see "Authorization of Tree Removals," this section.

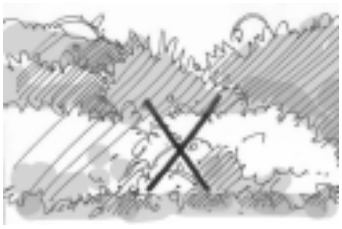


Figure 4a - BAD Vegetation Management
Dense impenetrable tangle
Low species diversity
Mostly invasive plants
Low visibility

Figure 5a - BAD Trail Safety
Perceived danger
More hiding places

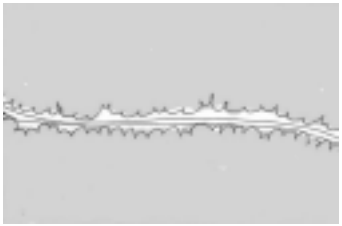


Figure 6a - BAD Edge Condition
Less edge condition
Less species diversity
Poor visibility

Figure 4b - GOOD Vegetation Management
Many layers
High species diversity
Few invasive plants
Good visibility

Figure 5b - GOOD Trail Safety
Perceived safety
Fewer hiding places

Figure 6b - GOOD Edge Condition
More edge condition
Higher species diversity
Improved visibility

Edge Condition Desirable

Promoting edge conditions in habitat restoration areas is considered a compatible and desirable management technique to achieve both habitat, public safety and recreation values. Edges are known to be areas of high diversity and high wildlife value, and are also reported to be areas where wildlife viewing such as birding is most successful. Edge conditions typically describe the transition area between different habitat types such as grasslands and forest. They may also occur along roadways or trails, when fallen trees create openings in the forest, or around small groves of trees in open areas (see Figure 6).

Invasive Species

Invasive plant species, as described in earlier chapters, are clearly the greatest threat to the health of native habitats in the park. The removal of all invasive species from habitat units is recommended. The proposed Habitat Inventory will list invasive species in the park and expand on the general approach to removal described in this plan.

Invasive Species and Habitat Function

Despite the fact that many animal and bird species have adapted to the use of invasive plant species for forage, cover, etc., invasive species do not contribute to the overall health and diversity of a native habitat. Most migrating bird populations, for example, do not rely upon or particularly benefit from non-native sweet cherries as a source of forage due to the timing of migrations. In cases where certain species have grown locally accustomed to habitat functions of invasive species, however, that function may also be provided by combinations of site-adapted native species (native elderberry and chokecherry, for example). Therefore, the removal of all invasive species, accompanied by the encouragement or re-planting of native species serving a similar habitat function, is the favored policy where invasive species serve apparent habitat functions that are desirable long-term. It is important to note that many areas of restored habitat, particularly where invasive species have converted one habitat type to another (for example from open, native prairie to dense brush and emerging forest) will not seek to replace the habitat function of the invasive species, but replace it with a preferred habitat function in a native ecosystem.

Understory Vegetation and Public Safety

Public safety is one key concern related to habitat restoration, as well as vegetation management in general. Overgrown vegetation is seen as creating potential hiding places for criminals and illegal campers that poses a threat to park users. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design puts forth recommendations that include clearing dense vegetation and restricting the height of vegetation in areas used by pedestrians (paths, parking lots, restrooms, etc.). However, wholesale clearing of vegetation and height limitations are also viewed as counter to restoration efforts. Some areas of dense vegetation are required by certain species of birds and animals for cover, nesting and forage. How can this apparent conflict be resolved?

Focus on Invasive Species Removal

By concentrating on eliminating invasive species, the question of dense understory vegetation is much simplified. English ivy, blackberry, Scot's broom, English hawthorn and others contribute greatly to an overgrown, dense and low-diversity understory in many areas in the park. Native plant communities, by comparison, tend to be relatively open, with greater species diversity as well as structural diversity - i.e. more layers and more openings (see Figure 4). By subtracting invasive species, and encouraging the natural re-growth of native plant communities, much of the affect of vegetation management for public safety reasons is achieved.

Diverse, Open Understory for Safety

Indiscriminate removal of the forest understory is not a preferred management option for public safety (see "Promote Natural Recovery of Native Plant Communities" for related remarks).

Management towards a healthy, diverse native understory is the preferred option, where the vegetation structure is defined by multiple layers, sight lines, openings, etc. (see Figures 4 through 6). In Habitat Units, reduction of dense vegetation and maintenance of a generally clear zone between 2' and 7' in height within at least 10 feet of major trails and travel routes is recommended (Figure 5).

Clearly, good judgment must be exercised in interpreting this recommendation. The purpose of this recommendation is reduce the perception of dangerous conditions along paths and trails in the park's natural areas. Legitimate park users will be more likely to frequent these trails if they feel safe, which in turn should reduce instances of negative use.

Restoration Techniques

The "Nudge"Approach

The "nudge" method is the preferred overall philosophy for restoration and maintenance activities, whereby existing plant communities are moved incrementally towards a more diverse and functional native ecosystem through subtraction restoration and the addition of appropriate species. This recognizes that a purely native ecosystem can not be realistically maintained, nor can restoration occur overnight.

Subtraction Restoration

Subtraction restoration is the favored approach to initiating restoration or conversion of impacted habitats. Through subtraction restoration, elements of existing habitats are slowly subtracted to achieve a desired affect. The subtraction can occur on a priority basis, for example with invasive species as the first to go. This technique is preferred for reversing the effects of succession, and allows progress to be checked while meeting goals of "soft implementation" (see **Viewshed Management Plan**).

Promote Natural Recovery of Native Plant Communities

In areas where invasive species are dominant, and where conversion to upland prairie is desirable, the appearance of wholesale clearing during restoration is inevitable before dormant native species are able to become established. The "subtraction restoration" approach is not intended to prevent large areas of invasive species from being removed. However, plans should be in place at the time of removal for restoration over the short term, including erosion control. Generally, restoration experts concur that where a native ecosystem has been taken over by invasive plants, the native species return quickly once the invasive species are removed. For example, local research is showing a 75% to 80% recovery rate of native species following the removal of dense English ivy cover. Recommended methods of aiding native species recovery include planting and scattering native seed, or planting small seedlings or cuttings of site-appropriate species.

Local research shows a 75% to 80% recovery rate of native plant species following the removal of dense English ivy cover

Bird Migration Overlay Zone

The shape of the Upland Prairie Management Unit (H4) expands and connects the existing prairie remnants on both the east and west slopes of the butte. Since the key areas for attracting and harboring birds during their migratory routes are on the south and north slopes of the butte, these areas are to maintain a significant, native tree canopy in a roughly hourglass shape (see Figure 7)). Openings, edges, and large deciduous trees such as maple, oak and madrone contribute to the function of this area for many species of migratory birds and recreational birding. This pattern is very general, and there may be other areas of important bird habitat, or areas that may benefit from enhancement as bird habitat, outside of this overlay that need to be considered.

Figure 7: Bird Migration Overlay Zone

This generally illustrates the overall pattern of migratory songbird use of Skinner Butte. A substantial canopy of large native trees should be preserved in this area (in appropriate Habitat Units)

Authorization for Tree Removals

Given the detail and scope of the new land use code for tree removals, the master plan must include appropriate provisions for implementing habitat restoration. Trees are hereby authorized for removal through the Habitat Management Plan section of this master plan on an as-needed basis for restoring habitat in all Habitat Management Units. Decisions about which specific trees should remain and which should be removed will be best made on the ground during the more detailed implementation phase of restoration.

Implementation

The Implementation Plan recommends specific actions related to each Habitat Management Unit, or to all Habitat Management Units. Some recommendations call for projects such as invasive species removal, tree removal from prairie restoration areas, etc., while others involve a research component, or coordination with volunteer groups and non-profit organizations. The Habitat Management section of the Implementation Plan represents the most detailed and applicable information for implementing the Habitat Management Plan. In addition to projects listed in the Implementation Plan, projects, funding and partnerships that support the intent of the Habitat Plan, or are compatible with goals outlined for a particular Management Unit, shall also be encouraged.

Trees may be removed for habitat restoration in Habitat Units

Viewshed Management Plan

Plan Development

General goals and areas affected by the Viewshed Management Plan were developed through the public involvement process for the Skinner Butte Park Master Plan. These reommendations were refined by two meetings of a combined focus group of citizen stakeholder groups, naturalists and City staff to tackle the more difficult questions of habitat and viewshed management in Skinner Butte Park. Many recommendations of this group are incorporated into this plan.

Intent and Application

The Viewshed Management Plan is a component of the Skinner Butte Park Master Plan that deals specifically with the preservation, restoration and maintenance of significant views from Skinner Butte.

Views are a Unique Function of Skinner Butte

Views from Skinner Butte are a unique function of the butte with a high community value. Protecting views as a unique function needs to be weighed strongly against other values that are not unique or site-specific. As a function of the trends described in Chapters 3 and 4, publicly accessible views once common to this region are increasingly threatened. It has therefore become necessary to begin considering ways to actively manage them for long-term public benefit.

Views Must be Considered Both Ways

Not only are the views from the butte important, but it must be recognized that there is, currently and historically, interest in protecting the quality of the views from downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods towards the butte. Consideration must be given to restoration methods and project time lines to insure that impacts are minimal, and that positive results are readily achievable.

"Soft" implementation
Restoration of views or prairie should happen slowly and carefully in conjunction with planting efforts. Implementation should happen, therefore, in a way that does not dramatically change the character of the neighborhood. This could be achieved, for example, through organizing immediate follow-through of restoration efforts where trees and other vegetation need to be removed. This would lessen the transition time and show positive results quickly. Also, taking small steps with restoration, one area at a time, would smooth the transition, build consensus around the success of small areas, and spread maintenance needs out over several years.

From a planning standpoint, preserving a "girdle" of mature trees around the base of the butte where trees currently exist would help screen roads or other features and retain the appearance of the butte from downtown and neighborhoods. The Bird Migration Overlay Zone (see Figure 7) generally achieves this effect from the south.

These recommendations apply equally to viewshed and habitat restoration, or to any other restoration project that has the potential to significantly affect the views of the butte.

Historic Trees
Some trees on the butte have been planted as part of historic community events, and represent the values of the community at the time. Special consideration should be given to these trees during restoration of views and habitat areas. The importance of views from the butte and their historic (and pre-historic) cultural function as a lookout point against the intrinsic value and historic significance of certain trees will need to be carefully weighed. Clear criteria should be developed to consider these alternatives.

Interpretation of Changing Values
Not only do historic trees have intrinsic value, but they are also useful for interpreting how community values change over time. The current trend towards tree preservation, and the need to balance it with other values such as views and restoration of endangered habitat, tells an interesting story that would help foster greater understanding within the community of the issues at stake. Restoration of views and habitat should address these questions through interpretation and community outreach. This applies not only to views, but to the value and changing role of certain habitat types, as well (the disappearance of savanna prairie, for example).

Tree Replacement
Some trees that are removed to restore historic views may be replaced with smaller, native trees. The decision whether or not to replace a tree may be made based on the desired condition of a certain area at the time of restoration. For example, tree removal in areas for management as prairie may not be replaced. Trees in densely forested areas may also not be replaced to increase diversity in the opening left by the removal. Where savanna prairie is desired, however, or where views of the

Community values affect the appearance of Skinner Butte

Figure 8: Critical Viewshed Overlay Zone

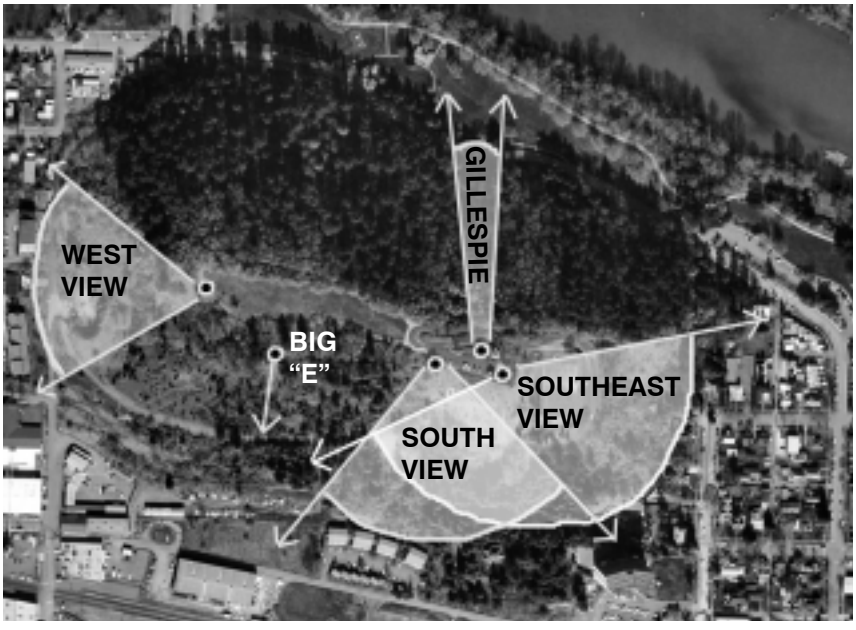
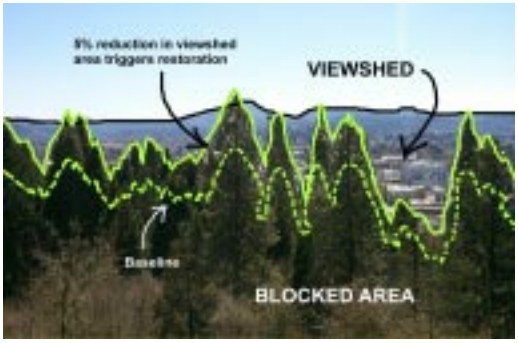


Figure 9: Sample View Threshold

These pictures show how a baseline view might be used to determine when view restoration needs to occur. Figure 9a could show the baseline viewshed. Figure 9b is digitally modified to show how the views might change over several years and trigger restoration efforts.

9a - Hypothetical photo of baseline view (note that actual baseline view will be taken after views are restored to approximate 1990 levels)



9b - Hypothetical photo after several years shows how a reduction in the viewshed area would trigger restoration

butte need to be protected or mitigated, appropriate native trees that are not likely to compromise the views in the future can be planted as replacements.

Mitigating Undesirable Views

Views from and towards the butte may also be improved through mitigation of undesirable elements in the views such as power stations or other utilities, obtrusive signs, etc. Considering that some undesirable views may change in the future, however, this tool should be exercised carefully.

Methodology

Threshold Approach to View Restoration

This approach involves setting an objective baseline for the level to which views may be blocked before restoration occurs. It shall be quantifiable and objective, based on criteria established through the Viewshed Mangement Plan.

Panoramic Views and Specific Views

Desirable panoramic views include a panorama of downtown Eugene, the south hills, the Cascades, the Coast Range and west Eugene (see Figure 8 for major panoramic viewpoints). In addition, views of specific, local features of cultural and natural interest will be listed for preservation. Specific views shall include: the Willamette River, the Three Sisters, Spencer Butte, Gillespie Butte, Willamette Street, the Hilton Hotel, the Hult Center, Judkin's Point, the Cuthbert Amphitheater, the University of Oregon, and Autzen Stadium. This list may be updated with Parks Planning Manager approval.

View preservation criteria should be quantifiable and objective

Base Line Views

An acceptable baseline for panoramic and specific view preservation shall be established at the views approximately present in 1990. This means that some restoration will need to occur now to return views to that general condition. The baseline should be established through a combination of restoration of existing general views (generally towards what would have been expected in 1990) and re-opening of specific views.

Establishing the Base Line

A record of the baseline will be set by photographing panoramic views and specific views from significant view points (see Figure 8) and calculating the area between the tree tops and the horizon (see Figure 9). Following restoration to baseline (1990) levels, photographs will be taken from specific, fixed points (monuments) placed permanently on the butte on an annual or semi-annual basis in a consistent, prescribed manner, and compared to the baseline. The horizontal and vertical location of these monuments shall be recorded, and the cameral height above ground, angle, lens lenght and time of year shall be established and remain consistent for all future comparison.

Restoration Threshold
Restoration efforts will be triggered when panoramic views have been blocked from baseline levels by more than 5%, or when specific views are compromised by 25% (See Figure 9).

Preferred View Restoration Approach
The preferred approach to panoramic view restoration is for "framed views", whereby selected trees may be removed to restore portions of the view that will return the overall view area to below the threshold level of view blockage. Through this technique, some trees will continue to grow into the view area, while others will be removed, maintaining the natural look and interest of full-crowned trees in the view foreground. Over time, the view can be managed carefully to achieve an aesthetic balance of foreground and background suitable for casual viewing or photography, painting, etc. Crown pruning is not considered an acceptable restoration tool.

Tree Removal Authorization in the Critical Viewshed Overlay Zone
Areas where viewshed restoration will need to occur is estabished by the Critical Viewshed Overlay Zone (Figure 8). All trees within these zones are hereby authorized for removal through this master plan. The Critical Viewshed Overlay Zone shall only authorize tree removal specifically for the purpose of restoring significant panoramic and specific views as described herein and in accordance with the Viewshed Management Plan methodology. Restraint shall be exercised during viewshed restoration efforts to maintain an aesthetically pleasing and ecologically functional landscape within the Critical Viewshed Overlay Zone.

Implementation Plan

Introduction

The following Implementation Plan (attached spread sheet pages 1- 20) contains the specifics of the master plan, including policy statements, research projects, programming suggestions, maintenance recommendations and improvement projects for all aspects of the Skinner Butte Park Master Plan. These recommendations are the culmination of research, public input, review and discussion that has contributed to this plan. The Implementation Plan takes precedence over other less specific discussions and recommendation herein. Other components of the master plan (vision, policy goals, etc.) provide a framework for interpreting and applying these actions. Policies give added direction for the Implementation Plan and help clarify proposals or elements that were not considered by this planning process process.

The Implementation Plan is a list of specific actions needed to achieve the vision

This painting by a local artist illustrates the cultural importance of maintaining viewsheds on Skinner Butte. Today, views of the river are nearly blocked by the trees in the foreground.

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Appendix A: Maps

Skinner Butte Park Master Plan

For more information, or to order copies of the Skinner Butte Park Master Plan, please contact:

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